



Governor Terry E. Branstad
Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds
San Wong, Director

Iowa Department of Human Rights Board
Lucas State Office Building – Second Floor, Room 201
May 1, 2015
Minutes of Regular Meeting

Members Present: Floyd Winter, Chair; Theresa Legg, Michelle Ray-Michalec, Sal Alaniz, Anna Brown, Ben Jung, Beth Coonan (phone), Clair Rudison, Sherri Soich, San Wong (ex-officio)

Members Absent: Senator Hart (ex-officio); Representative Thede (ex-officio), Karen Mackey

Staff: Mary Bowser, Budget Analyst; Steve Michael CJJP Administrator, Monica Stone, Staff.

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Winter call the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. A quorum was present. Introductions were made.

2. Action Item: Approve February 26, 2015 Minutes

Ray-Michalec moved to approve the February 26, 2015 minutes, seconded by Rudison. No discussion. Motion carried by voice vote.

3. Department Report

Director Wong shared two primary topics with the Board; an update on the DHR website, followed by an overview of the Community Action Strategic Planning Report by Steve Michael.

Website

Director Wong opened the update on the DHR website with a brief background. Until recently there was no distinctive and usable platform to create consistency in look and feel for all the entities within DHR. To accomplish the web site change, Danielle Ploughman, former assistant to the Director, led the planning process by meeting with senior staff to help create a strategic plan. Stone was then able to develop the web site based on that planning and obtain grant funding to migrate the web content. The site will go through extensive security testing in the next month, with the goal to publically launch the site on July 1, 2015.

During the planning process, a new purpose statement for the website was developed - *the Iowa Department of Human Rights website exists as a method to share information and data with the public, facilitate action and instill an image of our professional work.* Wong further emphasized that the vision for the web site is to *inform, unify and inspire.* She then turned over the meeting to Stone to provide an overview of the website.

Stone opened the presentation with some basic information about the system which is greatly simplified compared to the old program. The design concept is aimed at drawing people into the website more deeply to help connect them with the services available.

Stone then reviewed the new home page and explained how DHR could provide more current information, including a department calendar that captures all events and information related to events in one place. She then went on to share that each Division will have its own landing page with consistent features to unify information.

Stone demonstrated features that will be available for each area to easily create and modify information, add pictures and attach media. Examples include staff directories, frequently asked questions, news features, and a division calendar that will automatically populate into the main department calendar.

Wong wrapped up the website overview with two statements:

1. The Iowa Department of Human Rights will be transparent in official department, commission, council and board activities.
2. Connect citizens to services available through the department and our partners to reflect the department's expertise related to underrepresented Iowan's needs and aspirations.

Community Strategic Planning Report

Steve Michael provided the Board with an update on actions that have taken place since the original report was finalized last November. He indicated that the focus needs to be on creating a state-level umbrella plan to address disproportionate minority contact in the Juvenile Justice System. The real ability to make changes is at the local level, so building a state-level infrastructure to help support these community efforts is needed.

The task force identified 34 recommendations that were then put into the following categories:

- Law enforcement
- Education
- Human Services
- Juvenile Justice
- Judges
- Legislative
- Governor

Michael added that the next steps are to inform state leaders about the recommendations, engage them to be part of the solutions and then inspire local communities to do their part. Two meetings with Department directors have already taken place –with Roxanne Ryan, Public Safety and Brad Buck, Department of Education. A third meeting is scheduled with Chuck Palmer, Human Services.

Michael next discussed the upcoming community meetings to be held June 8-9 in Davenport, Iowa City and Cedar Rapids. A representative and technical advisor with the Annie E. Casey Foundation will be present to learn more about what communities are doing and to share information. Four other cities will be included in the future: Council

Bluffs, Sioux City, Des Moines and Waterloo. DHR staff will work with DHR Board members to identify local community meetings to attend, if Board members are available and interested.

Michal also discussed an initiative to close the educational achievement gap for minority youth in Iowa within the Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development (ICYD). The next ICYD meeting is in early June to continue work on the initiative.

Alaniz commented that he is hopeful that the continued work on the educational achievement gap initiatives will generate results, especially due to the negative impacts various related issues are creating around the country. He feels that there also needs to be increased parental and community engagement.

Michael indicated that the ICYD Results Team is comprised of staff from various agencies with expertise in each of the identified areas. With more coordination through ICYD and the ICYD Results Team, more results are happening.

The question was asked about whether or not there was potential for funding for the program. Michael responded that the ICYD would be looking for funding opportunities and would potentially work together through the Results Team to develop a grant application.

4. Board Member Updates

Office on the Status of African-Americans (Rudison) – Rudison reported on an event he had attended on January 29th on the Iowa State University campus featuring Michele Alexander, civil rights litigator and author of the book, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. Rudison indicated he was able to speak directly with Alexander on the potential for newspaper articles to be printed in Iowa to communicate many of the same statistics provided in her talk and book.

Rudison also shared his interactions with members of the Sentencing Project out of Washington D.C., an organization focused on collecting data on racial disparities in the justice system and provided a number of statistics emphasizing the problem.

Office of Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (Jung) – Jung reported that the Commission had presented their new policy agenda document that outlines their priorities at the legislative event held on March 4th in the Legislative Dining Room. He shared that the commission was pleased with the event and the turnout.

Jung reminded the Board that May is Asian Pacific American month, and that CelebrAsian takes place in the Western Gateway in Des Moines on both Friday and Saturday, May 22 and 23.

In addition, May of 2015 is the 40th anniversary of the Southeast Asian resettlement project in Iowa led by then Governor Robert Ray. A special event is planned in commemoration with an open invitation to all refugees and/or family members to attend.

Persons with Disabilities (Ray-Michalec) – The annual display “Building with Bridges” will take place again this year at the Iowa State Fair on August 14th. However, it is becoming

more difficult to find funding, interest and volunteers to participate so continuing to hold the event is in question.

Ray-Michalec said the commission asked her to raise the question about whether or not the idea of creating a Facebook page had ever been discussed.

Wong responded she had been asked the same question by many others, especially in the youth program areas. She indicated the DHR has been looking into it; however, there are a number of concerns, especially legal issues that would need to be addressed with the Attorney General's Office, to consider. More information is still being gathered.

Commission of Deaf Services (Legg) – The Commission meeting is scheduled for the morning of May 2, 2015. Legg reported that there was a good turnout for Capitol Day in April.

Criminal Justice (Soich) – Soich had no items to report.

Community Action Agencies (Brown) – Brown stated that their next meeting would be in June, in conjunction with the Iowa Community Action Annual Training Conference that brings in executive directors from around the state. The conference is a great place to network with local constituent groups and commissions. Brown shared that one of the key note speakers will be Mark Shriver, son of Sargent Shriver, who was the head of the Office of Economic Opportunity under President Johnson. All of the commissioners are invited to attend the conference in total or just for specific sessions or speakers.

Latino Affairs (Alaniz) – Alaniz spoke to the board about the opportunity for DHR Board members and Commissions to impact economic development, education, leadership, community involvement and volunteerism. Alaniz stated that at their next meeting, the Latino Affairs is planning to strategically examine the challenges we face in Iowa and call out for broad based community engagement to resolve those challenges. Latino Affairs' goal is to create something of value for the future.

Status of Women (Coonan) – Coonan stated that all of her comments were in her DHR report. She did point out that the selection committee is reviewing nominations for the 2015 honorees to the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame. The 2015 Iowa Women's Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony will take place at 10 a.m. on Saturday, August 22nd at the State Historical Building auditorium. The event is free and open to the public. A free reception will follow the ceremony in the atrium of the State Historical Building.

5. **Next Meeting:** Will be scheduled to coincide with the approval of the Department of Human Rights budget request
6. **Closing and Adjournment:** Chair Winter stated that he and Director Wong are really seeing this board come together due to the efforts of all the different areas.

Winter then shared a favorite quote of his related to leadership by John W. Gardner, Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare in the 1960's, *Leaders have success when those around succeed*, which seemed to directly apply to all the good work being done by the Board.

Winter then asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ray-Michalec moved to adjourn and it was seconded by Rudison. Motion carried by voice vote.